

CITY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

TO City Council MAYOR	DATE 9-22-76	CAO FILE No. 0220-00985(4)
REFERENCE Request from the Office of the Mayor to the City Administrative Officer, dated August 12, 1976		COUNCIL FILE No. 73-5199
SUBJECT Pilot Waste Newspaper Collection Program		COUNCIL DISTRICT

SUMMARY

Ordinance No. 146,705, approved November 1, 1974, approved a six month Pilot Waste Newspaper Collection Program in the Bureau of Sanitation whereby waste newspaper was to be collected separately from other refuse. The program was conducted between August, 1975 and January, 1976 in three carefully selected areas of the city. Six additional personnel were provided for the pilot project as well as \$40,000 in City funds.

The pilot program involved approximately 30,500 homes in the above mentioned areas. Extensive publicity preceded the program in hopes of encouraging public participation. Public participation in the program was much less than anticipated. At no time did public participation in the three areas exceed 10%, and the rate had dropped to 2% by the last week of the program.

The Bureau of Sanitation noted that in several instances scavenging activities took place, and a considerable amount of newspapers were removed by unauthorized persons. Attempts to prevent such scavenging met with little success.

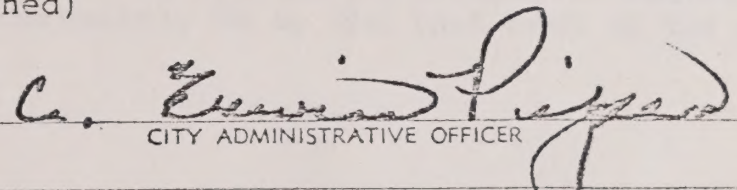
The cost of the program in the three test areas amounted to \$39,214. Sales revenue and cost savings amounted to \$6,690. Consequently, the pilot program resulted in a net loss to the City of \$32,524.

Future collection of newspapers on a separate basis can be accomplished by use of the City's reclamation centers located throughout the City, and described in the Findings of this report.

RECOMMENDATION

That the City not continue to engage in a separate newspaper collection program.

(Statement of Findings Attached)


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FINDINGS

1. The Bureau of Sanitation, in accordance with the instructions contained in Council File 73-5199, and Ordinance No. 146,705, conducted a six month Pilot Waste Newspaper Collection Program between August 4, 1975 and January 30, 1976. The major purpose of this pilot program was to gain information to determine if a recycling program could be successfully conducted by having homeowners separate newspaper material from the normal household refuse and set it out for a separate collection.
2. Waste newspaper constitutes approximately 10% of the total amount of household refuse collected by the Bureau of Sanitation. In 1973, and 1974, a shortage of fresh pulp needed to make newsprint developed. Additionally, foreign demand caused the price of used newspaper to rise to between \$20 and \$30 per ton. There also developed at this time an increased public interest in resource conservation. This higher price, coupled with a potential for favorable public participation, resulted in the City approving pilot program.
3. Three test areas in the San Fernando Valley, Central area, and the West Los Angeles area, were chosen to test the pilot program. The approximately 30,500 residences in these areas make up approximately 5% of household residences receiving City refuse collection service. These areas generally conform to the average income, education, and population density of the City as described by the Community Analysis Bureau.
4. Extensive publicity of the program was made prior to its beginning. One week prior to the start of the program, a door to door distribution describing the program and listing the specific dates of collection from within that area took place in all three affected areas. A follow-up door to door distribution was performed in November, 1975, to encourage further public participation in the program. Posters were placed in supermarkets and other public places typically frequented within the pilot areas. Fact sheets describing the program were prepared and sent to eighteen (18) environmental and community organizations. Information was also furnished to interested members of the public upon request. Newspaper, radio and television releases were made through the Board of Public Works Information Director at the beginning of the program and again at the mid-way point to coincide with, and reinforce, the door to door distributions.
5. At the inception of the program, projected participation rates among affected city residents were estimated at between 25 and 33%. Public participation was recognized to be the single most important variable in the Waste Newspaper Recycling Program. Increased participation affects the economics, collection methods, and work load capability of the collection crews. Actual participation in the three test areas range from a low of 3.6% in the Central area, to a high of 8.3% in the West Los Angeles area. At no time did public participation exceed 10%, and finally dwindled to approximately 2% by the last week of the pilot



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program. Such low participation rates resulted in unfavorable cost accruing to the City relative to this program. Sales revenue for used newspaper collected in this program approximated \$20 per ton. This resulted in revenue of \$4,460 for the six month period. In addition, estimated collection and disposal savings approximated \$10 per ton and amounted to \$2,230 for the same period. Collection costs, including salary, overhead, and vehicle cost amounted to \$39,214 for the six months. As a result, the City lost \$32,524 in conducting this pilot program. Six personnel and \$40,000 were provided by the Council to carry out the pilot program.

6. One further problem which arose during the course of the pilot program was that of unauthorized scavenging of newspaper set out for city collection. Scavenging activities, although observed in all areas, were heaviest in the West Los Angeles area. Numerous complaints were telephoned to district offices of the Bureau of Sanitation complaining of such activities. Ordinance No. 146,705, which provided for the enactment of the pilot program, also made the removal of salvage by other than authorized persons illegal. Efforts to eliminate such scavenging proved of little effect even though Field personnel of the Bureau of Street Maintenance were requested to assist in monitoring such scavenging activities. The Bureau of Sanitation reports that they were not able to quantify the amount of scavenging which took place.
7. The Bureau of Sanitation has recommended in a report dated July 26, 1976 that the City not continue to engage in a separate newspaper collection program. That Bureau has also recommended that any further separate newspaper collection be accomplished by use of the City's six reclamation centers operated in conjunction with the City's Saturday Reclamation Corp Program. These centers are open every Saturday to receive glass containers, aluminum cans, steel and bi-metal cans, and plastic containers from the public. Materials received are sold to secondary materials dealers for recycling. The Board of Public Works has approved these recommendations and the inclusion of waste newspaper in the Saturday Reclamation Corp Program. Notifications will be made to those individuals in the Saturday Reclamation Program and local resource recovery organizations indicating that waste newspaper will be included in the future. Appropriate news releases will also be issued. Revenue generated by this program goes to the City's general fund.
8. The continuation of the Pilot Waste Newspaper Collection Program is not recommended at this time for the above stated reasons.

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APPROVED:

Assistant City Administrative Officer

JLC:glj

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